

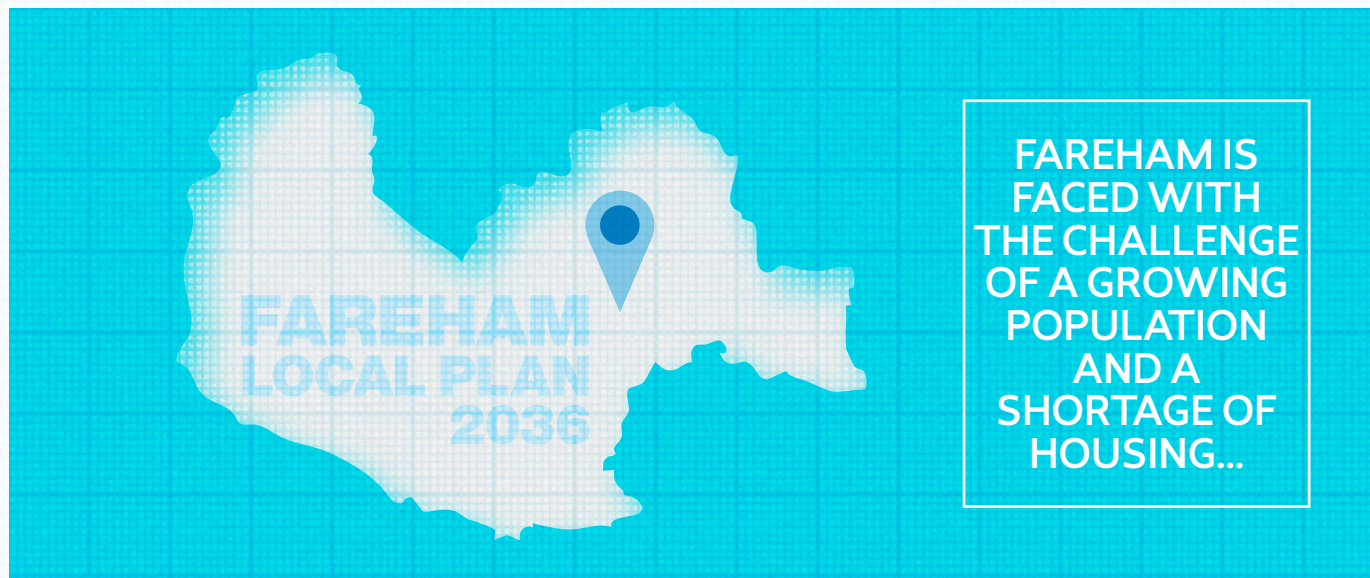
Special Housing Update | March 2018

Fareham TODAY

FOREWORD



BY COUNCILLOR SEÁN WOODWARD
EXECUTIVE LEADER OF FAREHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL



In the autumn the Council began its public consultation on our Draft Local Plan. This was the start of an important process that will shape development in the Borough over the next two decades. It is for this reason we have taken the unusual step of sending this special Fareham Today to all our residents by post as well as publishing online.

We held seven exhibitions and six Community Action Team (CAT) meetings so that residents and other interested parties could have their say on what we have suggested is the best way forward.

In total 2,500 people, community groups, businesses and other organisations completed a feedback form and I would like to thank them for their valuable responses.

Fareham is faced with the challenge of a growing population and a shortage of housing for residents, both now and in the future. This is not just a problem for us; it is a national trend.

Meeting this challenge requires us to make difficult decisions. And after personally speaking to people at the consultation events, and hearing and discussing their concerns, I know there is much apprehension about building more housing in Fareham. This is testament to the passion residents feel about preserving the community services, infrastructure and green spaces that we all share and enjoy in this Borough.

However, Fareham's immediate need for housing was brought into sharp focus by a Government Planning

Inspector's ruling to allow new homes to be built on a field at Cranleigh Road in Portchester. This was despite ministerial guidance suggesting our existing Local Plan would hold sway while the new Local Plan was produced.

Unfortunately delays to the start of the building of Welborne Garden Village due to land owner disputes mean this will not deliver all the homes needed soon enough. It will deliver around 4,000 homes in the period to 2036 and another 2,000 after that. That is 6,000 homes that will not need to go on other greenfield sites in the Borough.

If we do not make robust plans for new developments that will relieve housing need for the next five years then the decision about where homes are built will be taken out of our hands. Doing nothing is not an option and I know many residents appreciate that fact.

It is important to say that, in the interim, decisions on planning applications will still need to be determined on their merits and the recognised need for housing in the Borough as the Local Plan progresses. This includes those already submitted to the Council and any that are submitted before the new Local Plan is adopted. Residents will continue to be able to express their views on individual applications.

We have been consulting on what we feel are the best options in the Draft Local Plan and are now looking at how it can be adapted to take on board the views expressed during last autumn's consultation.

This special Fareham Today provides an overview of the Draft Local Plan to date and shares a summary of the consultation feedback. Further consultation on the next stage of the Local Plan will take place later this year.

TACKLING A NATIONAL PROBLEM LOCALLY

FAREHAM IS
NOT ALONE IN
NEEDING MORE
HOUSING.

There is a national shortage of housing. In Fareham we have seen our population grow as people live longer. By 2036 it is predicted that Fareham's population will rise to 129,000 residents – 13,000 more than today, including 5,000 more over 85-year-olds. This means we need to house three generations of homeowners whereas in the recent past only two generations would have been homeowners.

People are also living differently. An increase in the number of relationships that break down means families then need two homes.



One knock-on effect has been that house prices have risen as more people compete for homes. Young adults are living with their parents for longer as they struggle to afford a deposit for their first property. Building new homes and providing a range of affordable options so that more people can get on the housing ladder is a solution.

THE ROLE OF THE LOCAL PLAN

Fareham Borough Council has a responsibility to make sure new homes are built in a planned way. We do this by creating the Local Plan that is a blueprint for future development. It covers housing, employment, retail space, countryside and open spaces, as well as where leisure and community facilities are needed. We, as a Council, only build a tiny proportion of new homes; the majority are built by developers.

Every time we receive a planning application we use the Local Plan to decide whether the development is needed and appropriate.

A challenge we face now is that since we developed our existing Local Plan the Government has changed the way to calculate how much housing is needed in our area based on population growth. Using this guidance, we have determined that some 8,000 new homes must be built in Fareham between now and 2036.

Welborne will go a long way towards meeting this target but delays caused by land ownership issues mean not enough of these new homes will be built quickly enough. The Council is now working with the master developer to bring this project forward as quickly as possible.

KEEPING PLANNING DECISIONS LOCAL

The Welborne delays recently had an impact on a planning application for a greenfield site at Cranleigh Road in Portchester. The developer had been refused planning permission by the Council, but appealed. A Government Inspector stepped in to make a decision about the application. They found that housing was not being built quickly enough in Fareham, so decided the Cranleigh Road application could go ahead.

OUR URGENT NEED FOR HOUSING WAS AN IMPORTANT FACTOR IN THE RECENT DECISION TO GRANT PLANNING PERMISSIONS FOR AROUND 400 NEW HOMES IN WARSASH.

The result is that Fareham has to address the shortfall of new homes in the next five years by considering developers' proposals of land for new homes even though they are not in our existing Local Plan. The alternative is for a Government Inspector to make these decisions for us following what could prove to be costly appeals.

We need to progress our Local Plan to adoption to ensure planning decisions continue to be made locally to protect as much of our important green spaces as we can while providing new infrastructure and community facilities.

THE COUNCIL'S PREFERRED APPROACH

In 2017 we published the Draft Local Plan setting out our preferred approach to where 8,000 new homes could be built in the Borough between now and 2036. We offered residents the opportunity to have their say on this draft plan last autumn (see pages 6-7).

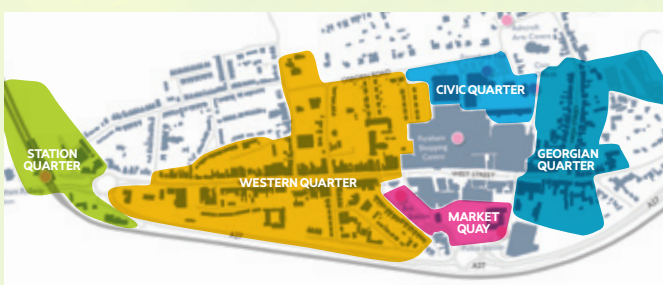
THE DRAFT LOCAL PLAN: HOUSING TARGETS

The target of 8,000 new homes is based on housing need assessments within each council area co-ordinated by the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) in line with current government guidance. The Draft Local Plan envisages on average around 450 houses will need to be built each year to achieve this target by 2036.

This approach will allow important infrastructure, like roads, education, health services and leisure facilities, to be planned and provided as needed. It will also ensure we meet local and Government housing targets on time.

WILL THE NUMBER OF HOMES NEEDED CHANGE?

The Government has recently indicated that nationally it wants housebuilding levels to rise. As a result it is likely that it will impose a new method of calculating housing needs which may see a significant increase in the housing numbers required in Fareham. The Council has made strong representations to the Government asking that the goal posts are not moved again but we await the outcome.



FINDING SPACE FOR NEW HOMES IS A CHALLENGE

We know that the Welborne plans will not now deliver all 6,000 homes by 2036 because the start date has been delayed by three years by land ownership disputes. It is now likely less than 4,000 will be built in that time. Our Draft Local Plan demonstrates where the remaining homes could be built around the Borough.

After asking landowners and developers where housing land might be found, we shortlisted sites in Fareham Town Centre, the Western Wards, Portchester and at Peel Common. We have tried to include as many brownfield sites as possible, but some greenfield sites are also in the plan.

The Council's long-term strategy is to see the majority of new homes built in a small number of larger developments and protect the important gaps that exist between major settlements such as those between Fareham, Stubbington and the Western Wards.



WHAT IS AFFORDABLE HOUSING?

Affordable Housing is for people who can't afford to rent or buy a home at market rates. Options for this include:

Social housing – low cost, rented accommodation often provided by the Council.

Affordable rents – these are charged at higher rents of up to 80% of market rates.

Intermediate housing – homes for sale or rent at a cost above social rented levels but below market levels – for example shared ownership.

In addition, **Custom** and **Self Build** could potentially offer cost savings which may help people get on the property ladder.

WHO WILL THE NEW HOMES BE FOR?

We want the homes built by developers to be in keeping with the characteristics of the areas in which they sit and to support the needs of local people seeking to get on the housing ladder.

All sites, including greenfield, that are for more than 10 homes should include 30 per cent affordable housing. The only exception is Fareham Town Centre where it will be 20%.



PLANNING FOR EMPLOYMENT AND INDUSTRY

The Local Plan also highlights land that can be used for new industry and employment developments. The key sites highlighted in Fareham's Draft Local Plan are parts of the Solent Enterprise Zone in Stubbington and at Welborne.

WHERE WILL NEW HOMES BE BUILT?

As the graphic above shows, we believe the best approach is to allocate land for development, in addition to Welborne, as follows:

700 homes on brownfield¹ sites including development in and around Fareham Town Centre and on the former Warsash Maritime Academy site.

2,500 homes on greenfield² sites with supporting infrastructure like road improvements, school places and improved access to healthcare

1,300 homes on windfall³ sites across the Borough.

The remaining 1,300 new homes could be built on smaller pockets of land proposed by developers. These are normally previously developed sites that have unexpectedly become available.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES THAT MEET OUR GROWING POPULATION'S NEEDS

We are working closely with partners such as Hampshire County Council who oversee the roads and schools and the Fareham and Gosport Clinical Commissioning Group, who commission local GP services, to help plan for the changing needs of the Borough.

The planning process can also help fund new infrastructure and services. For example, we have recently introduced changes to how we seek contributions from developers towards funding infrastructure.

Our new approach enables the Council to help fund much needed school places within the Borough as well as road improvements, without using the money needed for other community infrastructure in local areas.

- 1 Brownfield sites – have previously been built on
- 2 Greenfield sites – have never been built on
- 3 Windfall sites – usually brownfield sites not identified in the Plan that become available during the Plan period

YOUR VIEWS ON THE DRAFT LOCAL PLAN

We held a consultation on our
Draft Local Plan between
October and December 2017



There were opportunities for residents to find out more and give their views during seven exhibitions and six Community Action Team (CAT) meetings, as well as an exhibition in Fareham Shopping Centre and a special edition of Fareham Today.

More than 2,500 people, community groups, businesses and organisations completed a feedback form, with 4,300 individual observations being made.



IMPORTANT POINTS OF VIEW

FROM OUR EARLY ANALYSIS, A NUMBER OF MAIN THEMES, QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS WERE MADE:

Why is so much housing needed in Fareham? Many people questioned the amount of new housing being proposed for the Borough. Some felt the number of homes proposed was much higher than needed by residents in Fareham.

Concerns that most housing won't be affordable to the average person: a number of people questioned whether affordable housing is actually affordable for those in housing need.

The potential impact of more homes on the local road network: many people feel they already spend too much time stuck in traffic in Fareham and are concerned about the effect more cars will have on the local road network. They want improved transport infrastructure put in place before any more housing is built.

More cars means more pollution: some people were worried about the impact of greater levels of traffic on pollution levels and air quality in Fareham.

The possible impact of more homes on local health services, particularly GP surgeries: some people experience long waiting times before being able to see their GP for a routine appointment and are worried that more housing will mean more pressure on the local surgeries. They are also concerned about whether Queen Alexandra Hospital will be able to cope with more patients in the future.

Concerns whether schools can cope with the need for extra places: many people have heard that local schools are full and are concerned about whether they would cope with the need for more student places.

Impact on the local environment from building homes on greenfield sites: some people raised concerns about the possible impact on wildlife from building more houses, particularly those on proposed greenfield sites.

Concerns over the size and location of some of the proposed development sites: some people were concerned about the size of some of the proposed development sites. Others also felt that some areas within the Borough had too great a number of new homes proposed.

Each of these points, along with comments submitted about individual development sites proposed in the Draft Local Plan, are now being considered by officers. They are working hard to ensure that, wherever possible, the emerging Local Plan will tackle the issues raised during last year's consultation. When we consult on the next stage, responses to each of the key issues raised will be published.



NEXT STEPS FOR THE LOCAL PLAN

Every council responsible for planning decisions should have a Local Plan. This sets out the opportunities for development in its area, as well as what will or will not be permitted. It looks at housing, employment space and places where retail and leisure facilities should be provided.

It takes time to take a Local Plan from draft stage through to adoption but it should be noted that the process outlined on this page does not take account of any changes the Government may make to the National Planning Policy Framework.

This is important because, as explained on page 4, the Government has recently said it wants national housebuilding levels to rise. As a result it is likely that it will impose a new method of calculating housing needs. This may see an increase in the housing numbers required in Fareham.

The Council has made strong representations to the Government asking that the goal posts are not moved again but we await the outcome. An announcement on this is imminent.

WANT TO FOLLOW OUR PROGRESS?

We will provide further updates on the Local Plan on our website at www.fareham.gov.uk/planning/farehamlocalplanreview and on our social media sites. If you would like to contact the Council in connection with the Local Plan please email planningpolicy@fareham.gov.uk or call 01329 824601

1 Draft Local Plan: Autumn 2017
This was the consultation that took place last year on the Council's Draft Local Plan. We asked the community and other interested parties, such as developers and authorities responsible for roads, health and education services, to give us feedback.

2 Consultation on the Publication Plan: Summer 2018
The Council is currently analysing all of the feedback received before finalising its Publication Plan. When finalised, the Publication Plan will be shared with the community and interested parties for comment.

3 Submission Plan sent for Examination: Autumn 2018
This is the Publication Plan with suggested changes which we would like to make in light of having reviewed the comments that have come in. Both the Plan and the comments are submitted to the Government for independent examination.

4 Examination Process: estimated Winter 2018
The Examination is undertaken by an independent Government Inspector at the Council's offices. The community will be able to participate at the examination with the agreement of the Government Inspector.

5 Adoption: estimated Summer 2019
The Council will adopt the Local Plan once the Government Inspector has found it to be 'sound'. It is only at this stage that all of the policies in the new Local Plan will be used to determine planning applications.